

Digital Storyteller: National Cemetery People and Places



Project Title	Digital Storyteller: National Cemetery People and Places
Project Summary	Research and interpret American history through diverse veterans buried in NCA national cemeteries and monuments to them.
Country	United States

Project Description

VA's NCA History Office seeks up to three interns to create content for internal use and to publish on our public facing website. Interns will research primary records available through online sources and services in order to gather information about veterans buried in NCA national cemeteries, and related memorial objects that honor them. Example projects are described below. Most final projects should include an interactive, digital component that NCA can publish as a public-facing exhibit.

VA manages 135 national cemeteries nationwide, many were established during the Civil War or began as burying grounds at frontier forts. Help develop stories and themes associated with these historic resources—places and people—so they can be shared with the public. Who is honored with burial in a national cemetery? How are some groups remembered as time passes? How have the graves been marked?

The topic of national cemeteries offers diverse opportunities to an incumbent based upon academic discipline and interest, but the overall goal is to explore the stories of noteworthy veterans who, at different times in American history, are associated with events of lasting impact. This includes:

- Members of the Civil War's U.S. Colored Troops and their successors, Buffalo Soldiers—black men fighting for freedom, seeking equal rights 100 years before the Civil Rights Act was signed. Explore how their experience in the military shaped that quest and, seventy-five years since D-Day, how World War II impacted their lives in a segregated society.
- The army created seven new cemeteries after World War I, and another three after World War II, in the largest expansion of the national cemetery system since its conception. Research into cemetery design and memorialization trends in the World War II era.
- The circumstances in which foreign-born troops, allies and prisoners of war from World War II who are interred in VA cemeteries.
- NCA manages 1,300 memorial objects. Some are group grave markers. Many honor Civil War events and groups. Research into a complex monument may encompass the design, sculptor, manufacturer, engineer, veteran-service sponsor, dedication, expansion, relocation, repair, community involvement, and more.

Required Skills or Interests

Skill(s)

Data analysis

Editing and proofreading

Research

Storytelling/blogging/vlogging

Writing

Additional Information

The NCA History Program is looking for individuals with excellent plain language writing and editing skills, including familiarity with writing for web publication. Experience in tailoring content and style for a specific audience a plus. To learn more about what we do, please visit: <https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/history/index.asp>.

NCA will:

- Provide incumbents with foundation background about its places and burials (structures, landscape plans, interments), and a virtual orientation to NCA history. Historians will recommend high-priority groups of veterans and cemeteries to focus research.
- Introduce incumbents to the common public-record services as the primary means of conducting research. Other sources are acceptable if approved in advance.
- Support school requirements for students to receive academic credit for this work.

Required Skills or Interests:

A passion for researching the rich details of American history and national cemeteries through the disciplines of art/architecture, historic preservation, genealogy, public history, library science/collections management, social and cultural trends, military events and related fields.

Graduate-level study is preferred but not required.

Skills:

- Primary research online (e.g., Ancestry.com, Fold3, Newspapers.com, National Archives)
- Excellent writing/editing
- Web-writing best practices
- Balanced analysis of historic data
- Accurate, detail-oriented investigation
- Public history/oral history practices
- Storytelling in prose and digital formats (e.g., Storymaps, Timelines, Google Institute)

Additional information:

Research projects are ongoing. This internship(s) will concentrate on the areas identified by NCA as priorities: foreign prisoners of war; USCT and Buffalo Soldiers; national cemetery superintendents; oral history; and

commemorative monuments. All veterans are honored equally for their service to the nation. In this project, we focus on military achievements, civilian accomplishments, and circumstances of death that resonate on the national stage. Such Notable Persons are highlighted on each cemetery webpage, and contributions by virtual interns will add to our understanding of the individuals' accomplishments.

Language Requirements

None